

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 154451

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OEXC, CE

SUBJECT: IV GRANTEES: BANDARANAIKE AND RATWATTE

SUMMARY: VISIT OF ANURA BANDARANAIKE AND ANURUDHA RATWATTE WAS CONSIDERED HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BY DEPARTMENT, SRI LANKA EMBASSY AND TWO GRANTEES. ACCORDING TO BANDARANAIKE, PRINCIPAL POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS OF U.S. WERE OPENNESS OF SOCIETY INCLUDING CANDOR IN PUBLIC AND PRESS CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT, FRIENDLINESS OF AMERICANS FROM ALL WALKS, AND GREAT GEOGRAPHIC AND INSTITUTIONAL VARIETY WITHIN THE NATION. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICANS BANDARANAIKE EXPRESSED WITH APPARENT SINCERITY A COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. BOTH GRANTEES PROVED THEMSELVES EXCELLENT GUESTS, UNPRETENTIOUS AND FLEXIBLE AND POSSESSORS OF BOTH GOOD HUMOR AND STAMINA WHICH EASED THE FEW ROUGH SPOTS IN AN EXTREMELY BUSY AND EXACTING SCHEDULE. END SUMMARY.

1. PROGRAM CONTENT: THE GRANTEES MET A VARIETY OF HIGH-LEVEL WASHINGTON OFFICIALS AS ALREADY REPORTED THROUGH USIA CHANNELS. ON JUNE 24 THEY ALSO MET SENATOR MATHIAS OF MARYLAND AND REPRESENTATIVE SHIRLEY CHISOLM OF NEW YORK. ASIDE FROM WASHINGTON PROGRAM, SUBSTANTIVE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT WERE CALLS ON ACADEMICS INCLUDING HOWARD WRIGGINS AT COLUMBIA.
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BIA WHERE ANURA FELT AS IF HE COULD "TAKE OFF HIS SHOES"

WITH AN OLD FRIEND OF SRI LANKA, HARVARD WHERE HE MET AND ENJOYED PHILOSOPHIZING WITH PROF GALBRAITH AND AT BERKELEY WHERE HE WAS HOSTED TO A LUNCH BY LEO ROSE. (AT THE LATTER EVENT ANURA AGREED TO WRITE A CHAPTER FOR A STUDY OF LITTORAL POWER POLICIES ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN WHICH HE WOULD GIVE THE SMALL COUNTRY VIEWPOINT). AT BERKELEY THEY ALSO HAD A TWO-HOUR DISCUSSION WITH THREE GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO REPRESENTED AMERICAN HETEROGENEITY BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND ETHNICALLY.

2. THEY ALSO MET A CROSS-SECTION OF AMERICANS INVOLVED IN OR DEALING WITH DOMESTIC ISSUES. IN NEW YORK THEY MET CITY OFFICIALS WORKING WITH YOUTH PROBLEMS AT AN ASIA SOCIETY LUNCH; PAUL YAGER OF THE FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICE; CHARLES VINCENT, A SELF-MADE BLACK FROM A DIRT-FARM IN NORTH CAROLINA WHO NOW OWNS A LARGE OFFICE BUILDING AND IS ACTIVE IN REPUBLICAN AND HARLEM POLITICS. THEY DISCUSSED URBAN WELFARE PROGRAMS WITH JOHN GARDINER OF THE JFK CENTER IN CHARLESTOWN, BOSTON AND ANURA WAS PRESENTED A COMMEMORATIVE BI-CENTINNIAL PLATE BY CITY COUNCILMAN JAMES CONNOLLY. OTHER USEFUL MEETINGS INCLUDED A CALL ON THE NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER IN OKLAHOMA CITY WHERE THE SPECIAL WELFARE PROBLEMS OF URBAN AMERICAN INDIANS WERE DISCUSSED; A FARM TOUR CONDUCTED BY AN OKLAHOMA WHEAT FARMER, ED CLEVELAND, WHO WAS EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED ON POLITICAL AS WELL AS AGRICULTURAL SUBJECTS A TOUR OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO WHICH INCLUDED ATTENDENCE AT A MURDER TRIAL A CALL ON THE AFL-CIO SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE; AND A MEETING WITH THE STAFF AND CHANCELLOR OF THE EAST-WEST CENTER IN HONOLULU.

3. THE FUN BUT ALSO EDUCATIONAL SIDE OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDED DISNEYLAND, A REMARKABLY INFORMATIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE PANORAMA OF AMERICA, AND A VISIT TO UNIVERSAL STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD. THE GUESTS COMMENTED THAT THE MOST ENJOYABLE MOMENTS WERE THOSE OF HOME HOSPITALITY INCLUDING PARTIES COMPRISING LIVELY AND INTELLIGENT PEOPLE AT OKLAHOMA CITY AND WITH STATE SENATOR ANSON CHONG IN HONOLULU. ANURA PARTICULARLY RECIPROCATED THE WARM HOSPITALITY AND FRIEND-CONFIDENTIAL

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LINER OF PEOPLE AT SUCH FUNCTIONS AND IT WAS HERE IN DIRECT PERSONAL CONTACT THAT HE WAS MOST RELAXED AND TALKATIVE.

4. REACTION: PREVIOUS CONTACT WITH WESTERN CULTURE, PARTICULARLY IN LONDON, VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED CULTURAL SHOCK. THEY WERE DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE GEOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF AMERICA AND WERE GIVEN PAUSE BY THE

OBSERVATION THAT TOKYO WAS CLOSER TO HONOLULU THAN WAS NEW YORK. THEY WERE SURPRISED BY THE URBANENESS AND POLITICAL

INVOLVEMENT OF AN OKLAHOMA FARMER BUT ALSO NOTED THE LOCAL-
ITIS OF MANY OTHER AMERICANS THEY MET. THIS DID NOT SEEM
TO SHOCK THEM AND THEY COMPARED IT TO A SIMILAR PAROCHIAL-
ISM IN THE SRI LANKA HINTERLAND. THEY SEEMED MOST STRUCK
BY A GENUINE FRIENDLINESS OF AMERICANS WHICH DID NOT MATCH
THEIR PRECONCEPTION OF A HIGH DEGREE OF SUPERFICIALITY IN
PERSONAL RELATIONS. THE TOUR WAS FAST-PACED BUT THEY
MANAGED WELL. THEY ACCEPTED THAT THE GRANT COULD GIVE THEM
ONLY AN IMPRESSIONISTIC COLLAGE OF AMERICAN LIFE BUT
THOUGHT THEIR EXPERIENCES WOULD PROVIDE BENCH-MARKS FOR
MEASURING AND INTERPRETING EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN
AMERICA.

5. ANURA'S VIEWS: HE IS STILL DEVELOPING HIS POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY. HE TAKES FOR GRANTED CEYLONESE DEMOCRACY AND
SEEMS INSTINCTIVELY ORIENTED TOWARD THIS SYSTEM BUT HE ALSO
GREATLY ADMIRES THE CHINESE MODEL. HE EXPRESSED ON MANY
OCCASIONS THE MUTUAL HOSTILITY BETWEEN HIM AND THE TROTSKY-
ITES AND ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ASKED THE ESCORT AND ALSO
HOWARD WRIGGINS THEIR VIEWS ON A UNP/SLFP "NATIONAL GOVERN-
MENT." HE CLEARLY HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT SUCH A COALITION.
HE EXHIBITED SOME CONCERN ABOUT POTENTIAL CRITICISM IN
COLOMBO THAT HE HAD SOLD OUT TO THE AMERICANS AS A RESULT
OF HIS TRIP BUT REASSURED THE ESCORT THAT HE COULD "HANDLE
THEM" (HIS CRITICS). HE HAS NOT THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT ECONOMICS
AND AVOIDED DISCUSSING SPECIFICS OF HOW SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY
COULD BE ORGANIZED TO MEET LONG-RANGE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
DISAFFECTION. IN PERSONAL CONTACT HE WAS ALWAYS POLITE
AND, WHEN HE ENGAGED POSITIVELY WITH A PERSON, HE DEMO-
STRATED A COMPELLING CHARM. SOMETIMES, HOWEVER, HE VISIBLY
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TUNED OUT WHEN A CONVERSATION DID NOT INTEREST HIM. HE IS
A DELIGHTFUL COMPANION WITH A WINNING SENSE OF HUMOR AND A
DISARMING UNPRETENTIOUSNESS. HE WAS TOTALLY DISCREET AND
EXHIBITED NO EVIDENCE OF THE PLAYBOY IMAGE WHICH SOME HAVE
ATTACHED TO HIM .

6. ANURUDHA RATWATTE IS A QUIET BUT STEADY AND EXTREMELY
DEPENDABLE PERSON, OBVIOUSLY CAREFULLY CHOSEN BY MRS. BAND-
ARANAIKE FOR HIS SECURITY LIAISON FUNCTION AS MAN WITH
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILL WHO IS DISCREET AND INTELLIGENT. HE
IS MUCH LESS EXTROVERTED THAN ANURA BUT HAS A WINNING QUIET
CHARM.

7. CONCLUSION: THE VISIT SEEMED TO HAVE COME OFF EXTREME-
LY WELL WITH A GOOD MIX OF HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION AND EXPOS-

URE TO AMERICANS IN A VARIETY OF ENDEAVORS. A MORE DETAILED
REPORT WILL BE POUCHED AND DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE FEED-
BACK FROM COLOMBO. INGERSOLL

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